

AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER HISTORY GROUP NEWSLETTER

ISSN 1443-4962

No. 5

April 2000

5.1 NEWSLETTER

From this issue, the Newsletter has a new editor (Rod Kirkpatrick). Victor Isaacs, who launched the Newsletter, is having a well-earned break after producing four issues. His was a wonderful pioneering effort. As the new editor, I have a high standard to maintain. I am daring to attempt this task only because of the expectation that I will receive the assistance of each of you through contributions from time to time. Even if you contribute only two lines to every second issue, that will be significant. Some will want to contribute more. If you are starting a new project, or working on an unusual one, tell us about it. The editor's contact details are: Rod Kirkpatrick, Senior Lecturer in Journalism, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Qld, 4072 (or r.kirkpatrick@mailbox.uq.edu.au).

Deadline for contributions for the next issue is 15 May.

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(Items 5.12-15)

5.2 CHRONOLOGY OF RECENT EVENTS

12 December 1999	Death of George Tilley, editor of <i>Sunraysia Daily</i> , Mildura, Vic., 1956-1988 [<i>Sunraysia Daily</i> 18 Dec 99]
1 January 2000	<i>Townsville Bulletin</i> publishes an historical supplement including a history of the press in Townsville
22 February 2000	Formal commencement of work on Fairfax's new printing plant in Melbourne [source: <i>Age</i> 23 Feb 00].
22 February 2000	Death of Tennyson Henry Mott, journalist, <i>The Border Mail</i> , and director of the Mott family newspaper company, Albury. Aged 94 [source: <i>Australian</i> 14 Mar 00].
23 February 2000	Formal opening of Rural Press's new printing plant at North Richmond, NSW [source: <i>Canberra Times</i> 24 Feb 00].
19 March 2000	Canberra's <i>Sunday Times</i> included an historical supplement that featured an article about the early days of the <i>Canberra Times</i> .
23 March 2000	First anniversary issue of the "Media" liftout in the <i>Australian</i> .
24 March 2000	Fairfax announces \$70 million expansion for its Chullora printing plant in Sydney's south-west; the plant is forced consistently to operate beyond design capacity to produce Saturday editions of the <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> and <i>Australian Financial Review</i> [sources: <i>SMH</i> & <i>Canberra Times</i> , 25 Mar 00].
31 March 2000	John Lyons, national affairs editor for <i>The Bulletin</i> and former editor of the <i>SMH</i> , wins the Graham Perkin Award for Australian Journalist of the Year (1999) [source: <i>SMH</i> , 1 Apr 00].

5.3 FRONT-PAGE NEWS

Further to item 3.6 in Newsletter no. 3, which mentioned the existence in 1985 of one newspaper in Britain still printing advertisements in the traditional way on its front page, the following information has now come to hand:

The *Dundee Courier & Advertiser* switched to front-page news from 30 March 1992. It was the last daily newspaper in the UK to do so. [*Encyclopaedia of the British Press*, Macmillan, 1992].

5.4 PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

THE WIRED NATION CONTINENT: THE COMMUNICATION REVOLUTION AND FEDERATING AUSTRALIA by K.T. Livingston, Oxford University Press, 1998, ISBN 0-19-553633-9, 232 pages. Chronicles intercolonial cooperation in communications, particularly telegraphs, in the late 19th century. Includes examination of press reporting and comments on this issue, and an examination of how the arrival of the telegraph altered the reporting of overseas news in Australian newspapers.

A HANDFUL OF HACKS by Peter Sekules, Allen & Unwin, 9 Atchison Street St Leonards NSW 1590; ISBN 186448-788-7, 143pp, 16 illustrations, \$19.95. Introduces even complex and charismatic Australians – Chester Wilmot, Lorraine Stumm, Kenneth Slessor, Alan Moorehead, George Johnston, Richard Hughes and Wilfred Burchett – who generated some of the most exciting frontline coverage of World War II. Between them they covered all major theatres of war (except Russia) and all went on to establish their reputations or attain notoriety in related areas after the war.

5.5 RECENT ARTICLES OF INTEREST

AUSTRALIAN EDITORIAL ELECTION CARTOONS: IS THERE CHANGE AFOOT? by Anna Day in *Australian Journalism Review*, Vol. 21, no. 2, August 1999. Compares cartoons and editorials in Australian newspapers in election campaigns in the 1990s, finding in recent campaigns more bias and emphasis on personality.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY AUSTRALIAN TYPE FOUNDRIES by Dennis Bryans in *Bibliographic Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin*, 23 (3), Third Quarter, 1999, pp.164-179.

MALE ORDER NEWSPAPERS by Natalie O'Brien in "Media" liftout, *The Australian*, 16 March 2000, pp.6-9. Why so few women rise to the top editorial ranks in newspapers.

ONE-MAN PAPER BROUGHT LIFE TO A GIPPSLAND TOWN by Rod Kirkpatrick in *PANPA Bulletin*, March 2000, pp.63-65. About Norm Martyn, owner-editor of the *Mirboo North Times*, 1957-1985.

CARTOONISTS' NIBS PRICK POLITICAL FOLLY by Amanda Hodge in *Australian*, 31 March 2000, p.15.

NEW SOUTH WELSH NEWSPAPER TRAINS by Victor Isaacs, in the April 2000 edition of the *Times*, journal of the Australian Association of Timetable Collectors, ISSN 0813-6327, available at www.aattc.org.au or from the author (PO Box E383, Kingston ACT 2604, 02-6257 1742, ahdb@compuserve.com).

The article describes the introduction by the NSW government of an early morning train from Sydney to southern NSW in 1887 to enable Sydney papers to arrive there before Melbourne papers, thus "saving" the Riverina from Victorian influence. The history of this train and other newspaper trains introduced at later dates from Sydney to the West, South Coast and North are traced until their demise in the 1960s/70s. The article also refers to a 1902 NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into these newspaper trains, and to delivery of newspapers by trams in the Sydney suburbs.

5.6 THE WOBBLIES

Dr Frank Cain, of the School of History at the University of New South Wales, Canberra, writes: "I am working on a history of *Direct Action*, the newspaper of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) who were also known as the Wobblies. It was published out of the Wobblies meeting rooms in Sussex Street in Sydney and took a firmly anti-government line regarding the First World War. It so got up Prime Minister Hughes's nose that he had the Wobblies banned, its press seized and the leading members not born in Australia deported. It demonstrates the deep concern some radical newspapers can evoke in governing circles at particular times in Australia's history."

5.7 INDEX TO QUEENSLAND PROVINCIAL PRESS HISTORY

The editor begs the forbearance of his readers with this item. More than 15 years after its publication, my *SWORN TO NO MASTER: A HISTORY OF THE QUEENSLAND PROVINCIAL PRESS TO 1930* (Toowoomba, 1984) has an index. Kenneth J. Rae, a Sydney librarian who formerly pursued a close interest in newspaper history, produced the index, building on earlier work by Ainslie Girdwood, of Brisbane. You can obtain a copy of this index electronically by emailing the editor or hard copy of it by sending a written request along with a self-addressed A4 prepaid envelope to Rod Kirkpatrick at the address at the head of this newsletter. Enclose five stamps to cover photocopying costs.

5.8 HUNTER VALLEY NEWSPAPER INDEXES

Two Manning district researchers, husband-and-wife team, Rod and Wendy Gow, of Cundletown (near Taree, NSW), have compiled the first comprehensive index of the first two year's issues of the oldest New South Wales provincial newspaper, the *Maitland Mercury*, and have nearly completed an index to 1845. These are in addition to their index to the *Hunter River Gazette*, 1841-42.

The *Mercury*, the second paper published in Maitland, began publication on 7 January 1843, just as an election was about to be held for the revamped Legislative Council. The *Mercury*, a weekly at the time, quickly won a name for itself as the premier provincial title. It was established barely six months after the closure of the first Maitland newspaper, the *Hunter River Gazette*, which had survived for only twenty-nine issues. The *Mercury* itself would not have survived infancy without the 1843 election revenue, its proprietors later confessed.

Rod Gow said subjects in the *Mercury* indexed so far from 1843 to 1845 ranged from the depression of the 1840s (between February and October 1843 more than 1000 insolvencies were processed in Sydney alone) to those convicts who were granted tickets of leave - and those whose tickets were cancelled having committed, or were even suspected of having committed, colonial crimes; and from reports of bushrangers being captured and in some instances being publicly hanged, to shipping news and the establishment of new townships. The *Mercury* was not just a local newspaper reporting on Hunter River news and the Gow index reflects this in referencing articles relating to not only all of NSW, but also to the rest of Australia, as well as New Zealand and overseas news, as many of the latter news items had an effect on the population of the colony.

Direct inquiries to Rod and Wendy Gow, PO Box 73, Cundletown, NSW, 2430. Ph. (02) 6553 9933, or e-mail them at rgow@turboweb.net.au. Samples on Internet at www3.turboweb.net.au/~rgow

5.9 TODAY'S NEWSPAPER IS TOMORROW'S FISH-AND-CHIPS WRAPPER

Gordon Woolf (gordon@worsleypress.com) writes:

As someone who has been involved in the production of many newspapers, large and small, over four decades, I feel it may be worth reminding historians that newspapers are regarded as ephemeral by most of the people who produce them. "Today's newspaper is tomorrow's fish-and-chips wrapper" may no longer be literally true, but it is still very true in meaning. Therefore, if newspaper historians have regards to their successors, it may be worth taking some action on today's newspapers now.

For example, though it is a legal requirement to send a copy of each issue to the appropriate State Library plus a copy to the National Library, many newspapers have few posted subscription copies, if any, and the posting of this copy is left to a junior office worker with no check as to whether it is actually done. Maybe the library will send a reminder, and maybe that will result in an issue being sent - if there are any left. If there is a file copy, and a cutting is needed, you can guess what often happens. And if there is one unbound copy left and a

reader wants to buy a back issue, then satisfying that reader now is more important than ensuring a copy is available several decades later.

I've heard the story of newspaper historians being shocked to find last century's bound volumes on the floor being used as footstools to reach the more recent files. Many newspaper people will just wonder why the people who now want the old volumes didn't make sure they were kept when they were common.

Few newspapers compile indexes, so a suggestion of a helping hand in this direction may point out that it will help today's reporters as well as tomorrow's researchers. If you can suggest the computer software to use, that also would help many smaller papers. Many newspapers also have little interest in corrections other than those insisted on by solicitors, so today's inaccuracy is likely to become tomorrow's fact. It may also help to gently point out that a record of such problems might aid future generations.

This may sound as if I am being critical of today's newspaper management. I'm not. It is just pointing out that the interests of future generations come well down in the priority list – if they feature at all. There are, however, people who should have such interests high in their priorities: today's newspaper historians. Maybe we can all blame the real culprits: the floor covering manufacturers who now sell proper underlay, and the amazing response rate to the recycling of today's newspapers.

5.10 MEDIA TRADITIONS CONFERENCE

In anticipation of a call for papers mid year, Dr Denis Cryle (d.cryle@cqu.edu.au) has drafted the following in relation to the Media Traditions Conference to be held at Yeppoon, Qld, next year. The intention is to retain interdisciplinary perspectives while providing a common forum for research and discussion. Conference theme: Australian Media Traditions: Mapping Continuity and Change. Draft resume: The 2001 Conference will focus on historical issues of continuity and change within Australian media traditions. Special interest will be encouraged in identifying and exploring significant periods of transition and adaptation, either through broad socio-economic analyses or through case studies of individuals and organisations. Presenters are also invited to analyse continuities and rates of change within and across established media industries (printing, newspapers, magazines, broadcasting) as well as evaluating the implications of change for journalists and media workers generally.

5.11 HISTORY OF THE WESTRALIAN WORKER

Andrew Gill writes: The first edition of the *Westralian Worker* appeared on 7 September 1900 and was followed shortly afterwards by the opening of the Kalgoorlie Trades Hall, the first such hall in Western Australia. The centenary of both events will be observed in 2000. A special issue of *Papers in Labour History*, No. 15, published by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History (Perth branch) Inc., will include copious illustrations and an article on the editors of the *WW* during its Kalgoorlie years, 1900-1912. While preparing this article I began to contemplate seriously the notion of researching the entire history of the newspaper. I envisage three sections, or even volumes, covering: (1) the Kalgoorlie years; (2) the struggle for the *Labor Daily* in WA, and the years of the John Curtin editorship; and (3) the 1930-51 period [(2) and (3) require research in Canberra]. For each section it is my intention to include some detail on the politics of the management and the staff, as well as the machinery and the editors. This I hope will be a history of a newspaper – and a business – and not just hagiography of a “Labor paper”. It will be free of the jargon of “cultural studies” and “post modernism”. I would like to hear from any other researcher who has written or is writing about the Labor press in Australia. (Andrew Gill is at 3/15 Hamilton Street, Bassendean, WA, 6054; ph. 08 9379 8899. No fax or e-mail.)

Online News

5.12 INTERNET INFORMATION FOR AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS

The present developments in journalism will soon be history. In the article below, Belinda Weaver, a librarian at the University of Queensland, discusses her efforts to make research easier for journalism students and journalists.

No matter what you're looking for – from exchange rate comparisons to the latest scientific breakthrough – the Net can probably give you some answers. Finding them – quickly, before the deadline expires – is the tricky part. Journalists need timely, factual, easy-to-access information. I developed my Web site, GUIDE TO INTERNET INFORMATION SOURCES FOR AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS <<http://www.uq.edu.au/jrn/ozguide/>>, to meet that need.

Instead of using Web search engines (which can be both frustrating and time-consuming), journalists can use the site to go straight to the information they need. If they want the BRINGING THEM HOME report on the separation of Aboriginal children from their families, they can go to it directly online – they don't have to work out which search engine – might turn up the report, rather than just a passing mention of it in something unrelated. It's all about saving time.

The site focuses on Australian sources of both factual (e.g. legislation, awards, opinion polls, statistics) and background information (business information, trade figures and policy, government departments and reports). I created the site after seeing Robert Niles' site FINDING DATA ON THE INTERNET <<http://www.robertniles.com/data/>>.

Instead of giving general advice about searching or providing large lists of links, Niles' site was direct and to the point. Want census? Look here. Crime stats? No problem. Niles' site focuses on American data, so I built an Australian equivalent by tracking down and organising sources of Australian online data. I do include non-Australian links where appropriate, but on the whole, the focus is Australian.

The site currently includes 43 categories from Aborigines to Weather. There is also a reference section for quick access to dictionaries, fact books, encyclopaediae, maps, style guides and translation services. Each category includes several sources of information, which generally include government departments, statutory authorities and agencies, as well as the important non-government organisations in the field. These sites generally offer links to online publications as well as onward links to related sites.

Since finding contacts is so important to journalists, I also provide links to "experts" as well as to general people-finder tools. The site is not intended to be a "how to" guide on the profession of journalism. Nor does it try to list or organise sites about journalism. If journalists find it a useful working tool – one that saves them time and effort – then the site will have achieved the aims I had in mind when creating it.

The site has been live since June 1998, and has been continually added to since. I regularly check the site for broken links and provide an email address and online guestbook for visitor feedback. Most comments have been extremely positive. I always consider suggestions of sites or categories for inclusion. I am working on expanding the existing categories to include ethics and other related areas of interest to journalists as a profession. If so, the links will again be to sources to sites that host different codes of ethics, rather than to academic discussions. I am also working on a search tool for the site to make the information even more accessible. (Belinda Weaver can be emailed at b.weaver@mailbox.uq.edu.au)

5.6 MEDIASCAN

RMIT Publishing introduces MediaScan, a newspaper-indexing database specifically designed for students and researchers in Australian secondary schools, TAFE Institutes, universities and public libraries. MediaScan has been indexing newspapers since September 1991. MediaScan Ondisc and Online provide topical subject indexing for the following newspapers: *The Age*, *Australian*, *Bulletin*, *Courier-Mail*, *Herald Sun*, and *Sydney Morning Herald*.

5.13 NARRABRI'S COURIER IS ONLINE

The Courier (Narrabri, NSW) is now on line at: www.northwestcourier.com.au

5.14 DIGITISATION PROJECT

Bill Tully draws attention to a new website from the Australian cooperative Digitisation Project, called AUSTRALIAN PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, 1840-1845 (Ferguson 1840-1845) which is at www.nla.au/ferg with approximately 75 titles which began publication between 1840 and 1845, including *The Atlas*, *The Swan River News* (London), and *The Star and Working Man's Guardian*. The material is in full text (and enlargeable). The project is a joint effort of the University of Sydney Library, the State Library of New South Wales, Monash University Library and the National Library of Australia. There is a FICTION 1840-1845 sister project.

5.15 LINOTYPE WEBSITE

It may sound like an oxymoron, but Giorgio Coraglia, a retired Italian Linotype operator (gcorag@tin.it), has created a website dedicated to the profession of the Linotype and to those who have been Lino operators. He seeks contributions to enrich the site. He says there should remain a "testimony of an innovative profession that has allowed newspapers to grow". If you read Italian, you can visit the site (<http://digilander.iol.it/linotype/>) and send testimonies to Giorgio. If you don't read Italian, you can probably comprehend most of it with the aid of the Altavista translation program. You go to <http://world.altavista.com/> and type in Giorgio's web address, and you obtain a rough translation from Italian to English.